

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Section 68.4(a) of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing-Aid Compatible Telephones, Petition of American National Standards Institute Accredited Standards Committee C63 (EMC) ANSI ASC C63®, WT Docket No. 07-250.

I am pleased to vote for today's item, which will improve the access of Americans with hearing loss to cutting-edge wireless handsets. As I have stated many times before, one of the FCC's most solemn responsibilities is to ensure that *all* Americans have access to the nation's communications system. Our ongoing work in creating hearing aid compatibility (HAC) requirements for wireless digital phones is a critical part of fulfilling that mission. I am pleased that today's item continues the FCC's commitment to ensuring that Americans with hearing-loss will benefit from the exciting and on-going advances in the wireless marketplace.

I am especially pleased that the HAC framework we adopt today arises out of a Joint Consensus Plan developed by consumer advocates, wireless carriers and handset manufacturers. I know it took a great deal of hard work and dedication by the parties to reach this common ground, and I salute them for their efforts. This example of partnership among diverse stakeholders—as well as the private and the public sector—is a valuable and important model that I hope the Commission can encourage and replicate in other areas of its responsibility.

I also am glad that we provide a mechanism for these stakeholders to continue to work together to develop a proposal for how to deal with multi-mode handsets that use air interfaces and frequency bands (other than Wi-Fi) for which HAC standards have not yet been developed. I look forward to receiving this proposal within 3 months (and a more detailed proposal within 6 months) and then working with my colleagues to issue rules on this subject shortly thereafter. This timeframe permits us to resolve this important issue, in a way that provides clear rules of the road for consumers and industry, well before any such phones are brought to market.